

A FRIENDLY
DISCOURSE

Concerning Profane
Cursing and Swearing,

Wherein is shewed

The Heinousness of those Sins, and the Necessity of private Persons giving *Informations* for the Suppressing of them, pursuant to the late

ACT of PARLIAMENT.

In a Familiar Conference

Between Two Plain Persons.

Made Publick for the awakening of the Consciences of **Common-Swearers**; and the Vindication of our *Religious Informers*, who have been the Instruments of the remarkable abatement of SWEARING; and for the encouragement of all good Christians, to joyn their endeavours with them for the entire suppressing it; and by giving *Informations* to the *Magistrates* against it, **Drunkennes**, and **Prophanation of the Lord's Day**.

Because of Swearing, the Land Mourneth, Jer. 23. 10.

Let the Righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness. Psal. 141. 5.

L O N D O N,

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An Abstract of the Late ACT, for the more
effectual Suppressing Prophane Cursing and
Swearing, made in the 6. & 7. Gulielm. III.

That if any Person, after the 24 June 1695, Prophanely
Swear or Curse in the Presence of any Justice of the
Peace, or head Officer of the place where the Offence is com-
mitted; or shall be thereof Convicted by the Oath of One
Witness, or by his own Confession before such Justice or Of-
ficer, he shall for every such Offence pay to the use of the
Poor of the Parish where the Offence is committed, if Ser-
vant, Day-Labourer, Common-Soldier, or Common-
Seaman, One Shilling, and every other Person Two Shillings,
and for a Second Offence after Conviction double; and for a
Third treble. 1. That upon Neglect or Refusal to Pay, any such
Justice or Officer shall send his Warrant to the Constable,
Tything-Man, Church-Warden, or Overseer of the Poor
of the Parish where the Offence is committed, to Levy the
Sum forfeited to the Use of the Poor of the Parish; and in
case no Distress can be had, to set the Offender, if above the
Age of Sixteen, in the Stocks by the space of one hour for a
single Offence, and for more than one Offence, at the same
time, two Hours; but if under that Age, unless he Pay
forthwith, to cause him to be Whip'd by the Constable, or by
the Parent, Guardian, or Master of the Offender, in the
Presence of the Constable. 2. That if the Justice or Officer
wilfully or wittingly omit the Performance of this Duty in
the Execution of this Act, he shall forfeit Five Pounds, one
Moety to the Use of the Informer. 3. That if any Suit be
brought against any Justice, Officer, or Person, for any
thing done in pursuance of this Act, the defendant may Plead
the General Issue, and give the special Matter in Evidence,
and shall have treble Costs upon Verdict for him, or the
Plaintiffs Nonsuit or Discontinuance. 4. Proviso that the
Proof be within Ten days next after the Offence committed.
5. That the Act be Read in all Churches and Publick Chappels
immediately after Morning Prayer on Four Sundays, viz.
next after June 24. Septemb. 29. Decemb. 25. and March 24.
under pain of 20 Shillings for every Omission. 6. That the
Justice or head Officer Register all Convictions at the time,
and Certifie the same at the next General Quarter Sessions,
to be kept upon Record, to be seen without Fee.

A FRIENDLY
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING

Profane Cursing and Swearing.

S. **Y**OUR Servant Mr. M. I am glad to see you again this Evening, although I was much surpris'd at your bold Answer last Night, when I gave you that mild Reproof for **Swearing**, that you should say, *You thought it little or no Sin*; which is one reason of my waiting on you this Evening, in hopes to convince your Judgment of the contrary, if not reform your Practice.

M. Sir, I am glad to see you; but for my part, I am of the same mind I was last Night, which is, *That I do not think what you call Swearing to be no Sin at all*; yet I don't apprehend it to be a Crime of that Heinousness which *You* and some others seem to make it.

S. Well, I shall be glad that you will be so kind, as to spend this Evening with me, although you say, you are still of the same mind; however, let us be plain and free, since we have been so long acquainted, and give me leave to ask you one or two Questions.

M. With all my heart.

S. Do you believe the *Scriptures* to be true, to be the Word of God, and the Rule which we ought All to walk by, both in respect of our Deeds and Words, and that which we shall at last be Judged by?

M. Yes, surely, God forbid I should believe otherwise.

S. Well then, if you believe as you say, it makes me stand amaz'd at you; for, How can you think that Swearing is but a very small or inconsiderable Sin, when the Scripture is so plain in prohibiting and condemning of it? for it flatly forbids our Swearing by God's Holy Name; for in the Third Commandment, The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain: And our Saviour saith in the fifth of St. Matthew, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it is God's Throne, neither by the Earth, for ~~it is his Footstool~~. And in the same chapter it is said, But let your Communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsover ye more than these, cometh of Evil: And again, St. James 5. 12. Above all things, my Brethren, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other Vow; but let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into Condemnation: And in Jeremiah 23. 10. Because of Swearing the Land mourneth: And in Hosea 4. 2. Swearing has the van of the most crying and provoking Sins: And the Prophet David makes it a Symptom of Hatred against God, when in Psalm 139. 25. he says, Thine Enemies take thy Name in vain. These Texts are plain to be understood, and I might quote others of the same nature, but I hope these being well and seriously considered will convince you that Swearing is a Sin of no low degree.

Q. What I perceive you are of the Quakers Principle, and conclude, that 'tis not lawful to Swear at all.

S. You utterly mistake me. I do believe it's not only lawful, but a Christian's Duty to Swear; that is, to make an Appeal to God of the Truth of what he affirms; and the Sincerity of what he promises, when lawfully by the Magistrate call'd thereunto; for the Scripture gives not only countenance, but commandment to this Duty, Levit. 19. 12. and Deut. 6. 13. and chap. 10. ver. 20. and Heb. 6. 16. But it is against the Sin of Common Swearing, whereby the Name of

GOD is greatly dishonoured, and the Rules of the Scriptures impiously violated, and our Holy Religion contemn'd and disgrac'd; 'tis against *This* that my Discourse is levell'd, and 'tis against *This* that I produce these Scriptures.

M. Well, I do believe it is a Sin, but I hope 'tis no very great One, by reason there is so great a number of Swearers, and most of them think it a little or no Sin.

S. Alas! Mr. *M.* How can that Sin be little, that is committed against an Infinite Majesty? How can that affront be small, that is levell'd against Him, who dazzles the Eyes of Angels? If it were not against the Law of God, it could not be a Sin: But when 'tis so exprefsly forbidden, How can you, or they, or any Person whatever, conclude it to be little or no Sin?

But admit that the Guilt of single Oaths were no less venial, than is pretended, yet certainly, when in most Swearers, as well as in your self, the frequency of Swearing is so great, that in one day they are guilty of many scores of Oaths; these Sins not growing single, as Apples; but like Grapes, in clusters, their Multitude cannot but render them considerable; and you may consider, (since you are a Seaman) that a Thousand holes may as well sink a Ship, as some great Leaks; besides, these Common-Swearers are not only ruinous to themselves, but have a destructive Influence upon the Nation that suffers them; for what the Prophet relates of *Judah*, I wish were not now fulfilled of *England*; *Because of Swearing the Land mourns*, Jeremiah 23. 10.

But farther consider, The awfulness of the Divine Majesty, who, in order that a Fear of his Wrath, and a Reverence of his Holiness, Power, and Justice, might be kept always fresh upon us, has commanded us never to use his Name in Vain; i. e. never so much as to pronounce those Holy Words (whereby God has been pleas'd to stile Himself, and to communicate

the Knowledge of Himself unto his Creatures) idly, vainly, and without the greatest Reverence. Therefore, they who prophane the Name of God, (as all *Common Swearers* in a most grievous manner do) do not only break a Positive Law, but testifie, that they have no Fear, no holy Dread and reverent Awe of God before their Eyes; and, therefore, as I never knew, so it's utterly impossible that a *Common Swearer* should be a pious Man; but, on the contrary, One that breaks forth into any other Sin, whither *Pride*, or *Passion*, or *Lat*, or *Profit*, or *Humour* calls him. He that casts off the Reverence of God, (as every *Prophane Swearer* does) can never conscientiously keep any of his Commandments. Consider therefore, 'tis no single Sin, but such an one as is produced by a Fearlessness of God, and attended by any other Vice, which the Corruption of the Offender is most inclin'd unto.

Q. I do confess I believe there is something in what you have said, and that 'tis a greater Sin than I took it for before; especially where Men Swear at every Word; but I only Swear when I am angry, or in a passion, and I think no harm in it then.

S. How Man, think no harm in it, by reason you are angry, or in a passion! Surely the Sin is so much the greater, if you consider the Apostle's Command, *Ephes. 4. 26. Be ye angry, and sin not*: besides, this is but to excuse one Fault with another; to make a lesser Sin the Apology for the Commission of a greater. But, alas! how strangely industrious are Men to deceive themselves! But, remember, if we must answer for every idle Word, (as our Lord himself assures us we must) then will passionate Words add to our Account; but Swearing in Passion, (as if we would quarrel with our Creatour) this will weigh down the Soul (without a true Repentance) to the burning Tophet, to the Regions of Eternal Horror, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. **Q.** How!

99. How! be not so censorious; I hope I shall not be damn'd for an *hasty Oath*.

100. Sir, Bear with me if I tell you and all common Swearers your Doom, which will as assuredly as the Word of God is true, be past upon you hereafter, at the great and terrible Day, (without a sincere Repentance and Reformation prevent it) you, and all the Tribe of *Common Cursers and Swearers*, who profane the Name of our Great and Holy God, will make up your account to all Eternity in the Lake that Burns with Fire and Brimstone; for Heaven is a place too good for such who daily affront the Majesty of our King, by impious, rash, careless and heedless *Oaths and Curses*.

101. Sir, You startle me, I hope my Case is not so bad as you seem to make it.

102. Pray Neighbour consider, 'tis not I that make your Case either better or worse, 'tis the Word of God, 'tis the Holy Bible which you profess to believe. And if you behold your self in that true Glass, *That* will make you sensible, that you are altogether as deform'd as I represent you. And as to what you generally urge, that your Provocations are such, that you cannot avoid it; The Excuse is utterly false and sinful; for would you but give so much Money to the Poor, for every *Oath* you Swear, as the Law directs in that Act against *Cursing and Swearing*, I do believe it would not be long before you'd conquer it, although at present you think you cannot avoid it.

103. But there are others that Swear as much as I, and I seldom see them reprehended; and yet you were sharp upon me for *Swearing* last night but twice or thrice.

104. How strangely you answer! Am I therefore your Enemy, because I tell you the Truth? Your Excuse is, just as if in an Hospital a desperate Patient should say to his Physician, Why am I so much the Subject

of your Care, when there are so many others who are as bad, if not worse? If you complain of being reprov'd, you complain of being car'd for: And remember by the way, *As one may be far from Health, and yet not so Sick as gasping People; so it is but a very sorry Goodness, not to be as bad as the worst;* and I hope my Reproof will have a good Effect upon you, for I am sure I designed it for your Good.

M. I wish it may be for my Good; but, after all, I only Swear to the Truth, I scorn to Swear Falsly; and what I know to be True, I think I may Swear to without any harm.

S. This seems to be the very Sin of the Jews, whom our Saviour reproves in the Fifth of *Matthew*. They thought they might Swear, (as I have been inform'd) so they did but Swear to the Truth, in their common Conversation; and this was founded on that false gloss of the Elders, *Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old times, Thou shalt not forswear thy self.*--- Yet, however, lest they should prophane the Name of GOD by Common Swearing, they invented a sort of new and inferior Oaths; such as, *by Heaven, and by the Earth, and by the City of Jerusalem, the Metropolis of the Kingdom.* Much like to the idle and sinful Oaths of too many vain and ignorant Christians, who will Swear, *by Heaven, and by the Light, and by our Lady; by the Mass, by their Faith and their Truth.* But now our Saviour tells the Jews, and in telling them, He tells us, that all such vain Oaths are sinful, since all Oaths must terminate in GOD; and that our Communication should be plain and innocent; *Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more cometh of Evil.* But now you, Neighbour, exceed far the Impiety of the Jews; for you make no Conscience of Prophaning the Name of the Great GOD by your execrable Oaths, which Name ought never once to be spoken without the highest

highest Respect and Reverence. Therefore I beseech you to consider the Greatness of your Sin, which is also augmented very much by this, that there is in it no Temptation either of *Profit* or *Pleasure* to allure you to it; but shews that you are willing to affront God, and serve the Devil altogether *Gratis*; and that you are wicked, only for the sake of being so.

M. But if I don't Swear, the Incredulity of Men is such, they won't believe me.

S. Fie for shame, Man, don't so wretchedly proclaim your own Dishonesty, and want of Credit; for no sober Man, no honest, good and virtuous Man, will ever believe you the sooner for an *Oath*, but the sooner question what you affirm; for, How can I apprehend that that Man makes conscience of telling me a Lye, who makes no conscience of Prophaning the Name of God? and, indeed, we shall never find *Common Swearers* great Friends to Truth, but always the contrary; for, How often do we hear such Men swear to the Truth of a lying Jest, when even they themselves and the Hearers also know 'tis a Falshood?

M. God forgive me, I fear I have been sometimes guilty of that.

S. Why then consider the danger of this Sin: And that you may do it effectually, remember this Truth, *That God never will nor can forgive without Repentance and Reformation.* But supposing it true, (as it's altogether false) that Men will not believe you without this Sin, and that by it you purchase Belief; Credit is better wanted, than bought at so dear a rate, as *Sin*; and you make no better a Bargain than the Man in the Gospel, who lost the Kingdom of Heaven for some Stores in his Barns.

M. Ay, but 'tis so customary for Men of my Profession, (whose Imployment lies at Sea) that 'tis almost impossible to avoid it, especially under such great Provocations, and where few or none make Conscience of it.

B

S. Weak

S. *Weak is the Excuse that is on Custom built;
For th' Use of Sinning lessens not the Guilt.*

And Custom in Evil rather increases, than contracts the Fault, therefore you must not plead for it, but strive in good earnest against it, and desire the Almighty to assist you; *Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.* And as you would avoid hereafter the Punishment of those Sinners against their own Souls, when they shall be condemn'd to Eternal Torments; so now avoid the Sins which they are guilty of, which will assuredly lead to that place of Vengeance. And remember farther, that no Provocation can be enough to atone for a Sin.

M. Indeed I cannot well reply: I believe 'tis a Sin, and a great one too; But yet if we don't sometimes *Swear*, our Men will never obey our Command.

S. Alas, my Friend, 'tis a sad Answer you make; for, believe me, it is but an extravagant way of teaching our Inferiors to pay us their Duties, to teach them to disobey the Command of their Superiors by our own Example; and to lead them the way to despise the Injunctions of the most adored Power, to whom we confess to owe an impartial Obedience upon the highest Considerations.

But that there are ways enough to make those under your Command regard what you say, without your breaking the Law of God to induce them to it, appears from what I have been credibly inform'd by sober Persons; *That there was a time when our English Naval Force was formidable to all our Neighbouring Nations, when we were as terrible to all that oppos'd us, as if Victory had lodg'd her self in our Sails.* And then not so much as an Oath or Curse was heard in our whole Fleet. I was told by a Person who deserves Credit, and does also obtain it, (tho he does not Swear) who was an Officer in those days, *That tho they were exactly careful to punish this Sin in the Ship in which he was concern'd,*

cern'd, yet for several Months none was punish'd, because there was not a Man found Guilty. But now, since we have alter'd our Measures, and have chosen to become terrible to our Men, by most prodigious and new-invented *Oaths* and *Curses*, we no longer become a Terror to our Foes; God grant they may not prove so to us. And this, I think, proves we may Command without *Cursing* and *Swearing*.

M. Hold, hold, hold, why, what you are arguing for the times of Rebellion; I little thought you had approved of those Times, or any of their doings.

S. I thought you had known me too well ever to have suggested such a thought; As I always did, so I always shall, love Monarchy. But yet, as something was found good even in the House of *Jeroboam*, so this abstinence from this *accursed Sin*, in that Day, and under that Government, must be acknowledged, and also commended; and the contrary in us, I am afraid, must be own'd, and I am sure will be both here and hereafter condemn'd. And I will not be ashamed to confess my Thoughts, That till we are Reform'd, we shall never arise to that Glory and Greatness which our Fore-fathers were by the Almighty Bless'd withall. But this I urge only by the way: And whatever we now are, or hereafter shall be, I am sure this Sin shall not escape unpunished.

M. God grant we may all amend, I believe it's time: But yet, notwithstanding all you have said, methinks it looks something like a Gentleman, and a Man of Courage, now and then to grace our Speech with an *Oath*.

S. Why, Is *Swearing* the Mark of a Gentleman! which is indeed one of the greatest stains to his Reputation! at this rate every Porter and Carman may commence Gentleman when he pleases. And the greatest Coward may Swear as valiantly as the most fearless and undaunted General. For my part, I bless

God, I am not ambitious of those Badges either of Courage or Gentility, which our Holy Religion declares to be the Signs of Reprobation. But, indeed, this is an Affront to all the best of our truly Courageous and well-bred Gentlemen, who are so far from being tainted with this Sin, that they have made a Law against it, that it might receive a Punishment here, by a National Sanction; as well as 'twill do hereafter, by the Judgment of God.

And tho there are some *degenerate Gentlemen*, who do signalize their Impieties by this abominable Sin; yet the Better, the more Judicious, the more Valiant and truly Honourable hate it, and avoid it. And this, I thank God, I can speak by the intimate knowledge I have had the Honour to have of many worthy Persons, both for Families and Estates, who are free from this Sin. I liv'd in the Family of a very worthy Person, of a large Fortune, for three years, and in all that time I never heard him once either *Curse* or *Swear*; and I hope our Nation has many more such. And since we have a Law for the Punishment of this Sin, I heartily wish it was more carefully put in Execution, and that every *Magistrate* and *Officer* would discharge their Duty, in the effectual Punishing and Suppressing of this Sin; and that all other Men would be industrious to inform the Magistrate of it, as you may expect I will be, if ever I hear you *Swear* or *Curse* again, that you may pay the Penalty the Law directs, except you leave off *Swearing* without it; and I think you will have reason to thank me for it.

B. I must confess I have reason, as I told you before, to return you thanks for taking so much pains with me; but still I hope you will not turn *Informer* at last: But perhaps you are become one of this new Gang of *Regulators*, one of those they in derision call **Soul-Savers**.

S. I am not at all solicitous what Names the Agents of Hell do brand us withall ; for I do openly acknowledge my self to be one of that Number who have engag'd themselves to endeavour to put a Check to the Rampant Vices of our sinful Age ; such as **Cursing, Swearing, Sabbath-breaking, Drunkenness,** and **Uncleanness,** and the like. And how odious soever Men may endeavour to make Us, by loading us with Nick-names, I am sure both the Law of God and the Law of our Nation do encourage and commend detecting of notorious Offenders to the *Magistrate*, that they may receive a legal Reproof and Punishment for their Sin : And this is so far from *Hatred* ; that 'tis *Charity*, and perhaps the *Greatest* that can be shewn to such Persons Souls.

And as to what you urge of turning *Informer*, it's just as if one Commander at Sea should tell another, that he is a Roguish *Informer*, for giving Information how he may escape the *Privateers* or *Pirates* that are in such a place waiting for his coming, when at the same time he did not know of it before, and by the Information he and his Cargo is saved from being taken by those *Pirates* and *Robbers* : And as for your hoping I will not turn *Informer* against **Swearers**, I hope I shall love Almighty God better, and my Neighbour and my self too, than to take your Advice in this case, when it is my Duty, and an act of Charity, and the Duty of all Men, to turn *Informers* : And 'twas a standing Rule in the Jewish Nation, That such as heard or saw the Fact were to be *Informers* and *Witnesses* against the Offender, although it were a Friend or a Neighbour ; nay, they were to be *Executioners* too, as we read, *Deut. 17. 7. The hands of the Witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to Death, and afterwards the hands of all the People.* And in *Levit. 24. 11.* we find the People that heard the *Blasphemy* and *Curses* of the Son of *Shelomith*, carried him before the *Magistrate* ; They
told

told *Moses* of it, and, ver. 14. he gives Command to have him punish'd, and *all that heard him laid their hands upon his head, and let all the Congregation stone him.*

Besides, I and all Mankind are commanded to discharge this Charitable Office; *Levit. 19. 17. Thou shalt in any ways rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him.* So that I am diligently to pursue all proper means to pull the Swearer out of the Fire; and there is a Necessity of appealing to the Minister, to the Magistrate, to the Church, and to the Seat of Justice, that all fit Spiritual Censures and Temporal Chastisements may be applyed to him here in time, that his Soul may be saved, and that others may hear and fear, that we may put away the Evil from the whole Body of the People.

Again, we pray *That Magistrates may minister Justice in the Punishment of Wickedness and Vice;* and, How can we expect our Prayers to be answer'd, except we give Information to *Them*, since the Offence is seldom committed in the presence of the Magistrate? so that *Magistrates* must have Information from those that hear or see the Offence committed: And I hope I have convinced you of the Necessity as well as the Duty of it.

M. I must confess that I am almost convinced that the *Informer* does no more than the discharge of his Duty; yet I should have taken it ill of you, if you had informed against me, *You* being my particular Friend, and so long acquainted with me.

S. How can you take that ill, that is designed for your good, and when a Man does no more than the discharge of his Duty, and I had almost said, the greatest Kindness he can do you: For if *Good Laws* be necessary, if the *Execution* of them be necessary, if *Magistrates* be necessary for *That*, then must also the *Knowledge* of the Offences committed against the *Laws* be necessary to the *Magistrate*; and because they are seldom committed in the presence of the Magistrate, due *Information*

mation by those who have sufficient knowledge of any such Offences is likewise necessary, and the very Foundation upon which the *due Execution* of the *Laws* doth depend. From whence it doth plainly follow, that if Wickedness doth abound in a Nation, as we see and hear this Sin of **Cursing** and **Swearing** doth; by reason of which, I heartily wish and pray, that that *Prophecy* is not now fulfilled of *England*, which was once of *Judah*, *Jer. 23. 10.* for this Wickedness so much abounds in this Nation, that we have reason to pray that we are not involv'd in a National Guilt for not faithfully discharging our Duty in the *Correction* and *Reformation* of it; nay, even if it be to a Friend or a Neighbour, if we have sufficient knowledge of the Offence, let us give due *Information* to some proper Magistrate, unless the Offender will otherwise be brought to do what is requisite: And, as I shew'd before, this is a *Duty* confirmed by the Authority of Sacred Scripture, in those Texts I have just now quoted to you, and I might quote many more to that purpose; therefore I cannot see how you, or any body else, can take it ill that are Guilty of this **Trying Sin**, if I, or Others, should Inform the *Magistrate* of it.

W. I must confess I am convinc'd I cannot take it ill, and I think there is a Necessity in this wicked Age for Men to do it; and I heartily pray, that if ever I *Swear* again, I may be punish'd for it; and as you have been an Instrument, under God, to convince me of this Sin, as well as of the Necessity of *Informing* against it, I shall ever prize your Friendship, and think my self happy in so good an Acquaintance; and I hope you will pardon the Trouble I have put you to in answering my rude Arguments.

S. I cannot think that a Trouble, which I do for the Good of my Friend; and I must confess you make my Heart rejoice, to hear you say, you are convinced of the Sin, as well as the Necessity of *Informing*; for without *Informations* to *Magistrates*, this **Trying Sin** will hardly be stopp'd; and I wish good Men would be as openly Pious and Vertuous, and resolutely bent in the Punishing of Vice, as wicked Men are openly Vicious and Impudent in Committing of it; and as they are not ashamed to *Swear*, and prophane the Name of G O D, Why should I be
ashamed

ashamed to *Inform* the *Magistrate* of it? and as they take pains to get to Hell, let us be at some pains to get to Heaven: Let us declare our selves for God first, by living good Lives our selves; and, next, by encouraging others to do the same; and where we meet with those that are so far Servants to the Devil, as to break the Laws of God and the Nation, let us shew our selves to be the Servants of our God, by vindicating his Name, his *Laws*, and the *wholsome Laws of the Nation*; that by our *Informations to the Magistrate*, the Offender may be brought to see the Greatness of his Sin, and by that Punishment and Shame brought to *Repentance*: And putting the *Laws* in *Execution* will be one great means to mend the World, and without this it will hardly be done: It is not good Books, nor good Preaching, will reclaim such prophane and profligate Wretches, as the Swearers, and Drunkards, and Sabbath-breakers are; for such Persons will seldom or never read good Books, nor hear Sermons, nor accept of Counsel and Advice: They seem to be out of the reach of all other methods, except that of *Information to the Magistrate*.

But when *Magistrates, Constables, and Church-Wardens*, who are under special Obligations by their *Oath*, resolve to keep them in good earnest, and all good Christians ingage in it, to punish and frown Prophaneness out of Countenance, then the World will mend, if not grow devout, yet at least grow modester and civiller towards Religion, when good Men give Evidence that they do believe in good earnest, by Punishing the Prophaneness of all open Offenders, according as the *Laws* direct, and for which very end the very *Laws* were made: And we should condemn the Wisdom of our Fore-fathers, as well as our own Parliament, if we did not do it; for if Good *Laws* be not put in Execution, they had better never been made, then not to have them Executed; for, as the Violation of *Laws*, is a Contempt of *Authórity*; so the Neglect of the *Execution*, is a Prostitution of it, exposing the *Government*, and tending to the Dissolution of it, and to habituate and harden the People the more in Wickedness and Disobedience; which God forbid in this Christian Nation, where all Men ought to ingage in the Prevention of it, as I hope you will, now you say you are convinced of it.

But, Sir, lest I should give you an Occasion to say, I have paid you too long a Visit, I shall only remind you seriously to consider what I have said, and apply it to your own Heart and Soul, as you are going to Bed, and when you are in it, and I shall pray it may be to God's Glory. So wishing you and all your Family a good Night, I remain

Your most Faithful Friend, and Humble Servant,

H. S.